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You Were Chosen

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You Were Chosen

That wasn't how it happened.
You're supposed to think that it
was as simple as an angel, and a yes,
a donkey ride, and a manger.
Some stars and wise men and gifts.
It wasn't. Instead, it was a fourteen year old
and tears and an angry betrothed, and more tears.
A quick visit to family in the country and
then a freezing cold, terrible night in a pile of straw.
No better than an animal.
Joseph was never sure how to act around the baby.
Instead, he made things.
He would let the little one watch him
as long as he didn't talk or ask questions.
Under other circumstances, we might have been happy.
But Joseph refused to touch me.
Maybe that's where they got ever-virgin from.
He built tables and chairs.
Cabinets and houses and chests.
They were beautiful.
People would walk from neighboring towns
and congratulate him on his work and his lovely family.
He would smile a strained smile and bend over his work.
I would take the boy into the house and make bread.
We always ended up with extra when he helped.
Joseph was never really happy
unless he was making something out of nothing.
Creating something that would be entirely his.
Something I or the boy's real father weren't
a part of. When he finished something new,
say a bench, or a cart, he might come inside
and ruffle the boy's hair and say something kind to me.
More often, he put his tools away, washed,
and sat in silence at the table.
You can get used to anything after a while.
We went along, if not happy,
civil at least, until the boy became a man,
and left his father's work for Jerusalem. We thought
he was going to be a teacher.
After an incident with Pilate and the other
occurrence a few days later,
I tried to convince Joseph that
I had been telling the truth.
But before I could explain myself,
someone came to see him about a new
kitchen table.

Kelly Marie Prosen

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